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NEWSLETTER

100-1090

February 5, 1987

Washington DC

TAIWAN: WHERE BEEF IS BUST. In a classic display of bureaucratic obstinacy, the government of Taiwan scuttled a sale of South Texas cattle by impounding, and then slaughtering, the animals. Not only did this action ruin a profitable export opportunity by South Texas cattlemen, but Taiwan's action impugns the good name of South Texas cattlemen. Here is what happened:

Last November, exactly 98 heifers from South Texas ranchers were sold under contract to the Taiwan Sugar Company. The animals were shipped to Chicago where they were subsequently flown to Taiwan. This transport arrangement was made by Ag-World Export, Inc., of Bloomington, Illinois.

The overwhelming majority of U S international trading partners require certain livestock such as cattle to be properly vaccinated against brucellosis infection. As such, veterinary services in our area checked the cattle, found them all to be clean and free of brucellosis (as well as many other possible diseases), and then the cattle were vaccinated to prevent any possible future brucellosis infection. All in all, every detail of health was assured before the cattle were sent to Chicago for the flight to Taiwan.

When the animals arrived in Taiwan, the bungling began. Before the purchaser, the Taiwan Sugar Company, could take delivery of the cattle, the government of Taiwan stepped forward and impounded the animals--testing them for brucellosis. The Taiwanese have a big problem with brucellosis in their domestic cattle herds, and the nation is wary of further infection through imports. So the animals were tested in Taiwan under authority of the country's Agriculture Commission.

The Taiwanese authorities notified Ag-World Export that all 98 heifers tested positive for brucellosis and the animals would have to be repatriated or destroyed! This is where your Congressman enters the picture. The South Texans involved in this situation contacted me about intervening with the Taiwanese in an effort to save the cattle. And surely, I thought, the Taiwanese would listen to reason.

To begin, I made arrangements through the Taiwanese Representative in the U S (Taiwan is represented by an organization called the Coordination Council for North American Affairs). to have an urgent international cable sent to Taipei, the Capital, asking the Taiwan Agriculture Commission to hold-off on any plans to slaughter the animals until we could present our case.

Scientists at Texas A&M University sought to explain to the Taiwanese that cattle will experience a temporary, positive reaction to the brucellosis virus immediately

following vaccination. Vaccines are, after all, medicinal forms of the virus they are meant to inhibit. Animals, like people, will always experience a temporary, positive test for the virus from which the vaccine was meant to protect us in the long-term. This temporary reaction to a vaccine is not infectious. Incredibly, the Taiwan Agriculture Commission refused to acknowledge this simple scientific fact. The Commission mounted a television campaign in Taiwan and many Taiwan newspapers carried stories of the impending American cattle infection in their country! Despite high international talks through the Taiwan Coordination Council for North American Affairs, the Taiwanese would not budge.

The Ag-World Export firm sent a man over to Taiwan to see about setting up a sale with the Philippines and moving the animals out of Taiwan. But the Taiwanese did not allow this plan enough time to mature--and began slaughtering the cattle during the week of January 19, five at a time, until all were killed by burning on January 28. The sale was lost for our South Texas ranchers and the Taiwanese showed nothing but intransigence and lack of good reasoning in their refusal to listen to logic.

What is most interesting is that Taiwan does not require brucellosis vaccination on imported cattle--but the country is plagued with this disease and it does not want imported animals bringing the virus into domestic herds! The Taiwan refusal to listen to the scientific facts about vaccinations and their temporary reactivity is regrettable. Somehow I feel that perhaps the Taiwanese were obstinate because of current friction on other trade matters with the U.S. Anyhow--we gave this our best shot for success, but ran into a wall of international trade disagreements that prevented the Taiwanese from allowing the Texas cattle to remain.

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THE LUCKIEST SIGN OF ALL. If you were born in the Chinese Year of the Hare, you are the luckiest soul of all! And at this very moment, the Chinese are involved in a two-week new year's celebration (January 29 through February 13) to commemorate the Chinese New Year of 4685. This year is the sign of the hare.

The rabbit on the Chinese zodiac represents extreme good fortune, longevity, ambition and success in financial endeavors. The hare is fantastically lucky and has the uncanny ability to choose a winner everytime. The Chinese say that anyone born under the sign of the hare should marry a sheep or boar! And stay away from those under the sign of the tiger...

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GRAB YOUR SLED AND OFF TO WORK. Last week was a nightmare for commuters trying to get from the suburbs to Washington for work. Why? On January 22nd, mother nature socked us with 12 inches of snowfall. Then--just three days later on Super Bowl Sunday, the 25th--she wracked us with a major winter storm we call a "Northeaster" and left another 12 inches of snow.

Morning rush hour on January 26th was nothing short of insane--what with 2 feet of snow on the ground. Parts of the city resembled a war zone, and I mean that literally.

The snow was coming down pretty hard in the late afternoon on January 22, and I concluded that driving home to our place in the Northern Virginia suburbs would be difficult if not impossible. There are some steep, hilly roads to negotiate outside of Washington, and in a foot of newly fallen snow I couldn't see doing it!

So your Congressman settled down for the evening in your Congressional office! This was some storm...

Undeterred, your Congressional office opened on Friday the 23rd and on Monday and Tuesday, the 26th and 27th, despite the heavy snow. Now that's dedication. The majority of our staff plowed their way into the office and most South Texans who called probably had no idea what it took to just make it to work those days. You'll pardon your Congressman for saying so--but I am just darned proud that my staff did what most other offices didn't do: come to work full steam like any other day. That's commitment and it is appreciated by me, and I know by our constituency.

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VISITORS FROM HOME. Mary Lourdes Yanos of Jourdan; Kevin Plyler and Tony Gonzalez of San Juan; Malcolm W. Welch of McAllen.

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